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ABSTRACT

This literature-research unit centered on a study of the religious quest provides a vehicle for developing several skills in addition to involving students in an examination of the nature of religious experience and the roles religion can play in the lives of people. The student will learn how to write extended definitions, compare and contrast compositions, and do a research paper. This nine- to twelve-week high school English unit is part of a series developed by the Public Education Religion Studies Center at Wright State University. It is intended to serve five purposes: (1) It causes students to contemplate the role of religion in the lives of the young; (2) It allows students to gain some background in several religions; (3) It provides interesting subjects for research; (4) It provides an interesting vehicle for learning some of the skills needed in doing research; and (5) It provides good subjects for composition writing. Generalizations, concepts, subject matter, and vocabulary are briefly outlined. Sixteen cognitive and affective objectives are identified. Detailed initiatory, developmental, and culminating activities are described. Evaluation suggestions are given followed by numerous references for both student and teacher. (Author/BC)

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THE RELIGIOUS QUEST

prepared for
Secondary English

by
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for the
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The Religious Quest

INTRODUCTION

A. This unit in the religious quest serves multiple purposes:
   1. It causes students to contemplate the role of religion in the lives of the young.
   2. It allows students to gain some background in several religions.
   3. It provides interesting subjects for research.
   4. It provides an interesting vehicle for learning some of the skills needed in doing research.
   5. It provides good subjects for composition writing.

In a time when many English Departments are being urged to abandon the thematic approach to "go back to basics," it is important that English teachers clearly define the way they are able to teach basic skills within thematic units of study. This literature-research unit centered on a study of the religious quest provides a vehicle for developing several skills in addition to involving students in an examination of the nature of religious experience and the roles religion can play in the lives of people. Within the unit the student will learn how to write extended definitions, comparison and contrast compositions, and the research paper.

B. This unit of study is probably best used with eleventh and twelfth grade students because they will need to have developed basic writing skills that will allow them to go on to composing well-developed, two-to-three page compositions and to learning how to write a documented research paper. However, the unit is appropriate for students of varying academic abilities because of the choice of books available and the flexibility in subject and length of research paper that these research projects can accommodate.

C. At least nine to twelve weeks are needed if a research project in religion is to be included in the unit. This unit could be used as the central theme for a semester course in a program where language skills other than the ones suggested in this unit are to be taught.

CONTENT

A. Generalizations
   1. Religion plays an important role in the lives of many people.
   2. Religion sometimes presents the maturing teenager/young adult with serious problems.
   3. Religion can help people deal with the conflicts of life.
   4. Religious experience contributes to the formation of a world view that affects the behavior/life style of the individual.
   5. The maturing individual's religious views and practices may or may not coincide with the religious heritage of his family.

B. Concepts
   1. Ritual
   2. Worship
   3. Conversion
   4. Meditation

5. Divinity
6. Religious Symbolism
7. World View
8. Life Style

C. Subject Matter Outline
1. Poetry - on the nature of religion
the role of religion
religious experience
2. Novels and Biographies

Students will choose to read at least one of the following. If a semester is involved the student will read at least two books on the religious quest.

The Chosen, Chaim Potok
Go Tell It on the Mountain, James Baldwin
The Cross and the Switchblade, David Wilkerson
Siddhartha, Hermann Hesse
The Autobiography of Malcolm X, Alex Haley
Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, James Joyce
Clap Your Hands, Larry Tomczak
The Brothers Karamazov, Fedor Dostoevsky
Crime and Punishment, Fedor Dostoevsky
The Promise, Chaim Potok
My Name is Asher Lev, Chaim Potok
Pillar of Fire, Karl Stern
Seven Story Mountain, Thomas Merton

3. In addition to reading the books the students will read essays on the religious experience and on several religions as well as a few selections from primary sources. A number of sound filmstrips, movies, and possibly some video tapes will be used to enrich the students' understanding of the religions involved in the lives of the characters of the books they are reading.

D. Vocabulary
In this unit the vocabulary study is centered in the books the students choose to read. The following lists are examples:

The Chosen

1) samovars
2) Hasidic
3) orthodox
4) conservative
5) reformed
6) earlocks
7) yeshiva
8) Talmud
9) synagogue
10) rabbi
11) apikorsim
12) Messiah
13) pilpul
14) tzaddik
15) Yiddish
16) Torah
17) Zionism
18) dogmatic
19) inductive
20) Revisionists
21) kosher

Siddhartha

1) Brahmin
2) Upanishads
3) ascetic
4) Samanas
5) nirvana
6) dharma
7) Atman
8) moksha
9) sojourn
10) essence
11) salavation
12) fast
13) transitory
14) karma

The Cross and the Switchblade

1) fleece
2) tithe
3) prayer of petition
4) prayer of praise
5) Holy Spirit
6) circuit rider
7) Pentecostal church
8) evangelizing
9) ignominious
10) spiritualists
11) converted
12) empathetic
13) "turf"

Go Tell It on the Mountain

1) the Power
2) sanctified - sanctification
3) Sunday school
4) revival meeting
5) evangelist
6) baptized
7) saved
8) testimony
9) "shout" song
10) Holy Ghost
11) redeemed
12) conversion
13) saints - as used by Baldwin in the book
14) the Son

OBJECTIVES

A. Cognitive Objectives

1. The student will analyze the problems that the major character/characters in the novel or biography face in the first few chapters of the book.
2. The student will identify rituals and/or practices of the religion that are central in the book read.
3. The student will explain the role religion played in the main character's life.
4. The student will share with others in discussion what he has discovered about religious practice and the role of religion in people's lives.
5. The student in discussion with other students will compare and contrast different religions using the following points: Rituals and Ceremonies, Stories and Sacred Writings, Creeds, Laws, Practices, Religious Leaders
6. The student will write a composition comparing and contrasting two religious experiences found in audio-visual presentations and/or books.
7. The student will write a composition in which he gives an extended definition of one or several related religious terms.
8. The student will demonstrate his ability to take notes by all of the following methods: lists of facts, summaries, paraphrases, direct quotes.
9. The student will demonstrate his ability to find a variety of sources on one subject by presenting a tentative bibliography of at least five sources of material on the religious subject he has chosen to research.
10. The student will demonstrate his ability to organize material by presenting an outline for the research paper.
11. The student will demonstrate his ability to combine his research efforts into a single study by handing in a research paper including cover page, outline, table of contents (if appropriate), footnotes, and bibliography, using the form required by the department.

B. Affective Objectives
(Some of these affective objectives will be observable during the study of the unit; others will not be measurable because they are long-range objectives.)

1. Students will discuss the religious experiences of the characters in their books objectively, that is, without making fun of them or criticizing the nature of their experience.
2. Students will share some of the religious experiences they have observed or been a part of without embarrassment or fear of negative reaction on the part of the group.
3. Students will express an interest in developing or taking a course in world religions either in high school or at the college level.
4. Students will demonstrate their excitement about the study of religion and religious experience by staying after class or after school to discuss some of the material they have discovered.
5. Students will be tolerant of and interested in the different religions of their community.

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES

A. Initiatory Activities - There are several possible activities that could make an effective introduction into this unit. One or more of the following would be appropriate.
1. Show the students a selection of slides representative of several different religions. Include settings for religious experience, ritual experiences, distinctive dress, symbols, and any others that seem appropriate.
Have the students write down descriptions of what they see in some of the slides.
When you have finished the series, go back and show some of the slides again and have the students compare and contrast some of the slides.
2. Give the students a pre-test on religious terminology and major religious figures. The following are examples of what can be done - Write on your answer sheet the letter of the religion that each of the following is a part of: a) Buddhism, b) Christianity, c) Judaism, d) Hinduism, e) Islam

1. Torah	6. Mahayana
2. Koran	7. Sermon on the Mount
3. New Testament	8. Yoga
4. Reg Veda	9. Talmud
5. Mecca	10. Four Noble Truths

- Identify the religion of each of the following:

1. Krishna	7. the Prophet Mohammed
2. Elijah Muhammed	8. Malcolm X
3. Master W.D. Fard	9. Abraham
4. Ezekiel	10. Shiva
5. Jesus of Nazareth	11. Siddhartha Gautama
6. Moses	12. Paul of Tarsus

3. Use a poem or several poems to get into the question of what religion is and the role that it plays in people's lives. Have the students read a poem and respond to it in writing. Have the students consider together the essence of a poem. Several poems that are appropriate for this assignment are: "Journey-Not a Destination," page 56; "Dark Passage," page 77; or "The Test,"

page 42, from Take Off Your Shoes by Mark Link, Argus Communications.

B. Developmental Activities

1. After introductory descriptions, the students choose from the list of novels and biographies the book they wish to read. It is possible to allow each to choose his own or have the class select three or four books to choose from. The teacher is able to have more frequent discussions on each book if the number is limited.
2. During the reading of the books, the teacher holds group discussions of the books being read. At least three discussions of each book are advisable. Following is an example of questions for discussion of the beginning of Baldwin's Go Tell It on the Mountain: "What early impressions do you get of John? Happy? Religious? Intelligent?" "What creates these impressions?" "What's important about John's family?" "What particular aspects of their religious practices are brought out?"
3. A presentation is made on four methods of notetaking: list of facts, summary, paraphrase, and direct quote. Examples are studied and then students are given a copy of an article on Hinduism, Buddhism, or Islam and asked to make notecards from the material read using all four methods. This activity is appropriately followed the next day by a class viewing of a sound filmstrip on the same religion and a class discussion of that religion.
   Later this lesson can be repeated using a different religion in order to broaden the students' general knowledge of other religions and give them experience in notetaking before they begin their own research.
4. Because the teacher must be occupied with small groups for at least nine days of the period when the books are being read, other small group or individual activities are important and should be carefully structured. The following is an example of possible activities.

Activities
Go Tell It on the Mountain

On days when I am busy discussing with other groups you are to work on the following activities (that is, if you are caught up on your reading assignments).

1. Find information on the author, James Baldwin, and take notes as you have been instructed to do. Make Bibliography Cards for each source you use. Follow the bibliography guide you were given.
   a. First, check the encyclopedias; check more than one since some include more detailed information than others.
   b. Then check the source books on Negroes, Blacks, Afro-Americans, etc. You will find these in the Reference Room of the Media Center.
   c. Next you will want to look for books on Baldwin, or books on American novelists, or books on Black Authors.
   d. Eventually you will use this information in a paper on the relationship of Go Tell It on the Mountain to Baldwin's life.
2. See the sound filmstrips on Black Religion. I have these, and you may take them to the media center to view the"Messenger

Seven." Consider the following:

a. In what way do you obtain a different picture of the Black church from the filmstrip than you have received from the novel?
b. Do you know what pictures depict a pentecostal religious experience?

3. Do some research on the meaning of pentecostal religion or church. What are the particular characteristics of pentecostal religion and worship?
It would be a good idea to take notes on this also. Since you don't know for sure what your research topic will be, you may find that this source material could be used once you get to your individual project.
Make Bibliography Cards for sources used in this investigation also.
4. A variety of movies that will enrich the students' experience with religion study is available. These films should be used for discussion of the religion they are about or of the religious experience that they convey. Sometimes they can be used as motivation for composition writing. The following is an example of a composition assignment using film.

Contrast Composition Assignment

Purpose of composition: Contrast the religion of the Holy Ghost People in the film of that name with the religion of the Buddhists of the film Awareness. If you are unable to use the Buddhist religion in your comparison and contrast, then use the religious experience of your book for this assignment.

Writing skills that will be evaluated in the grading of this paper:

Introduction: You should try to find an interesting way of getting into the contrast. We studied the following possible methods:
1. relating an incident
2. giving an example
3. using an analogy
4. using a quotation
5. asking a question or a series of questions
6. making a startling statement
7. defining a term
8. describing something

Topic Sentences for Paragraphs - ones that will indicate a contrast is being made

Signals - use of words such as- but, however, yet, although, on the other hand; adjectives like- more formal, more subdued, quieter, louder, livlier, more internal, more exciting, etc.

other words - whereas, different from, in contrast to

5. Because there is so much new terminology in this unit, it is an ideal place to teach methods of writing extended definitions. Sometimes the composition can be one in which one word or concept is defined; other times more than one term can be defined. The following is an assignment possible for the students reading Siddhartha.

Siddhartha: Go to the library and look up the following terms in order to write this composition. You may wish to use more than one source. Encyclopedias are useful, and there are some books on world religions as well as on Hinduism that could be helpful. Use more than one source. Also it will be helpful to discuss with the rest of the group before composing your paper.

brahman karma moksha
atman dharma

composition assignment: Develop a paper using the following sentence as your thesis.

"There are several terms that are impostant in understanding the religion of the Hindus."

6. Guest speakers could be invited to share information about a particular religion with the class. However, if this experience is to be a part of the unit, it is important to prepare carefully for it. The speaker should know what it is you want the class to learn from the visit and what he must not do in his presentation. Anything that could be construed as proselytising is not legal and must be avoided.
7. There are a variety of compositions that can be assigned in this unit beyond those that are to fulfill the specific objectives of learning to write extended definitions and comparison-contrast papers. Several examples follow:

The Cross and the Switchblade -
Use the following as your thesis statement: The Cross and the Switchblade is an illustration of how some individuals believe that the power of their god leads them to accomplish his will.
(In this paper you will explain to the reader of the paper, a student in this class who is not reading the same book you are, how this book serves as a testimony, etc. This means you will need to refer to a number of instances where Wilkerson believes he is led or supported or helped. You will also need to make clear to the reader the results of the help. What is accomplished? If you have completed reading the book, you can, of course, use the whole book, but if you have not, use what you have read, or

From your knowledge of the Bible choose a person who had experiences similar to those of Dave Wilkerson. Then write a paper showing how Wilkerson's religious experience is reminiscent of events in the Bible.)
In order to prepare for this writing, you will need to review the story from the Bible that you are going to use so that you can be accurate.

The Autobiography of Malcolm X -
Write a composition about the problems Malcolm faced as a child and teenager. Before you begin to write, make a list of the problems. Consider the following categories: family problems and economic problems; racial problems; problems of individual identity; religious issues, questions and problems.

Go Tell It on the Mountain -
Write a composition explaining the problems that John is coping with around the time of his fourteenth birthday. Before you begin writing the paper, make a list of the problems. Consider family problems, religious questions, individual identity problems.

The Chosen -
Write a composition explaining the nature of the feelings of conflict David experiences in the early chapters of the book. Before you begin writing, make a list of the conflicts. Consider his feelings about the Hasidic community, his feelings about the game, his feelings about his injury and the cause.

8. Students should select a religious subject they wish to learn more about for a research project. A topic related to the religion of the novel or biography read is preferable, but if the student has another idea that he is excited about, he should be allowed to pursue that study.
The following is a list of possible topics for research papers. There are many additional possibilities.

History of the Pentecostals
Religious Practices and Rituals of Christianity
Role of Prophecy in Christianity
Contrasts in Ritual and Worship Practices in Christianity
Concept of the Holy Spirit and Speaking in Tongues
Expansion of the Charismatic Movement in America
Famous Black Religious Leaders
The Bible and Its Message to Blacks
History of the Black Church in America
Musical Contributions of Black Religion
A History of the Writing and Translating of the Bible
The Morman Religion
The Faith and Religious Practices of the Jehovah's Witnesses
Church Architecture
Religious Painting
The Religious Art of Rembrandt
The Religious Art of Marc Chagall
Music in Christianity
Judaism: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform
The Culture of the Jews
Religious Holidays of the Jews
Religious Practices of the Jews
The Place of Study in the Jewish Religion
Persecutions in Jewish History
The Koran
Mohammed and the Founding of Islam
Relationship of Islam to the Judeo-Christian Tradition
The Differences in the Black Muslims and the other sects of Islam
Elijah Muhammad
Art in the Muslim World
The various sects of Islam
The Spread of Islam
Family Rituals of the Hindus
The gods of the Hindus
The Religious Literature of the Hindus
The Art of the Hindus
Yoga
Indian Mythology
Reincarnation
Modern Buddhism
The Ethics of Buddhism
The Faith and Practices of the Buddhists
Buddhist Art
Buddhism in Japan
Mahayana Buddhism

Students are expected to follow a schedule in doing their research and putting together a research paper. They should have a deadline for turning in their general topic and one for a narrowed topic. The rest of the schedule should involve the following: tentative bibliography, several notecard checks, a preliminary outline, a revised outline, a rough draft of their paper which should be carefully critiqued, and a final draft completed according to an approved form.

C. Culminating Activities - There are several activities possible at the end of the unit. One or both of the following can be used.

1. This program should be used with great care since it is written from a Western evolutionary perspective which views Christianity as the natural culmination of "primitive" and "less adequate" religious experiences and practices. Also, it tends to cast non-Western religious experiences and forms into Western categories and thereby denies or overlooks some of the major differences between Western and non-Western religions. However, it is possible to help students discover these erroneous presentations and interpretations and thereby help them become more sophisticated students of religion. Therefore, students will discover some questionable statements in it if they listen closely and consider what they have learned about the religions of the world. It is possible to have them identify those statements and explain to the class their disagreement with them. It is also possible to use this to show how, because we come to the subject of world religions from a Western viewpoint, we are likely to center the final segment of the film around religion as we in the West experience it.

   It is advisable to use these slides apart from the sound script to stimulate discussion on modes of worship, places of worship or meditation, role of music and dance, etc. If students have seen a variety of films and filmstrips, they should be able to carry on a good discussion about the great variety in religious experience in our world.

2. Involve all of the students in a discussion on what they have learned about religion during their study in this unit. Have the students prepare for the discussion by giving them these topics ahead of time. They should consider the books they have read as well as the religion they researched in making notes for the discussion.
   a. What are the ways of being religious that you discovered in the books and films?
   b. What world views did you find in your study?
   c. What effect did these world views appear to have on life style?
   d. In what way did the religion/religions you studied originate?

EVALUATION

A. Most of the unit's objectives will be measured during the course of the unit study through evaluation of compositions and quizzes, individual or small group discussions on the books read and on the various religions studied, and step-by-step evaluation of the research process as well as of the completed research paper.

B. Student evaluation is accomplished by using a point system:

Compositions	50 Pt. possible
Paragraphs	15 Pt. possible
Quizzes	10-15 Pt. possible
Group Discussions	25 Pt. possible
Research Paper	
Tentative Bibliography	25 Pt. possible
Notecard Check	25 Pt. possible
Notecard Check	25 Pt. possible
Preliminary Outline	25 Pt. possible
Revised Outline	15 Pt. possible
Rough Draft	75 Pt. possible
Final Paper	200 Pt. possible

Of course, students do not always get the total number of points possible for completion of a particular assignment. Both quality and quantity of work are taken into consideration.

C. The following are possible components for a questionnaire on the effectiveness of the unit:

Rate the following activities of the Religious Quest Unit.
- if extremely valuable
- if somewhat valuable
- if of limited value
- if of no value

1. Discussion of books
   list of specific books
2. Sound-filmstrips
   list of specific programs
3. Sound-slide Programs
   list of specific programs
4. Movies
   List of specific programs
5. Notetaking Instruction
6. Composition Instruction
   comparison-contrast
   definition
   others
   research paper
7. Media Center Orientation

a. no, b. a little, c. yes, d. a great deal

I expanded my knowledge and understanding of the role of religion in people's lives.

I expanded my knowledge of the nature of religious practices.

I would be interested in further study of world religions in high school or in post-high school education.

INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES

Books for Teacher and Student Reference

General:

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"Vejen" 22 min. color. Carousel Films, Inc.

Christianity:

"A Matter of Conscience" 30 min. color. L.C.A.

"The Bible: A Literary Heritage" 27 min. color. L.C.A.

"The Holy Ghost People" 53 min. McGraw-Hill.

"The Jesuits" 51 min.color. Time-Life.

"People, Power and Change" 29 min. color. Univ. of Minn.

"The Ultimate Trip" 32 min. color. NBC.

"The Vatican I, II" 54 min. color. McGraw-Hill.

Hinduism:

"An Indian Pilgrimage: Ramdevra" 25 min. color. South Asian Area Center, Univ. of Wisc.

"Image India: The Hindu Way" (eleven films) color - Syracuse University.

Islam:

"History and Culture I and II" 56 min. McGraw-Hill.

"Islamic Mysticism" 28 min. color. Hartley.

"Journey to Mecca" 15 min. Association Films.

Judaism:

"Israel" 30 min. color IFF.

"Israel: A Story of the Jewish People" 31 min. color ADLBB.

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